

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

*Motherhood* movie is one kind of comedy drama movies. This movie is starring Uma Thurman as Eliza Welch, Anthony Edwards as Avery and Minnie Driver as Sheila; it has many conflicts in there. The screenplay of this film is adapted from script that is written by Katherine Dieckmann. Beside that *Motherhood* movie is also directed by Katherine Dieckmann, an American writer and director, screenplay, and occasional editor. Katherine Dieckmann emerged as creative force in filmmaking during the late '90s. Dieckmann is the maker of comedy and love drama film. In so doing, she rode the American "indie" filmmaking boom initially catalyzed by directors such as Ed Burns.

Dieckmann first began to attract attention for her *A Good Baby* (1999). The film drew heavy and unanimous critical praise for its originality and bravura. She is also directed the cult children's television series, *The Adventures of Pete and Pete* (1993-1996 with title *Day of the Dot*, *the Nightcrewlers*, *X=WHY*, *Time Tunnel and Space*, *Geeks and Johny Unitas*), and the other title movies such as *A Good Baby* (1990), *Diggers* (2006) and the title that will be discussed *Motherhood* (2009).

For several years; this was not the case, and aside from directing occasional R.E.M videos (1990 and 1991) and the best of R.E.M video documentary. The next emerged in (2006) with features *Diggers*, about a

group of claim *Diggers* an extremely enthusiastic response from the public and press, and ran at both the Southwest Film Festival and the International Film Festival.

*Motherhood* is a movie starring Eliza Welch, she is a former fiction writer-turned-mom-blogger with her own website, "The Bjorn Identity," who lives and works in two rent-stabilized apartments in a walk-up tenement building smack in the middle of an otherwise upscale Greenwich Village. Her husband Avery is constantly busy and not at home. She has two children, Clara and Lucas. Starting at dawn, her to-do list is daunting: prepare for and throw her daughter's 6th birthday party. Eliza decides to enter a contest run by an upscale parenting magazine. All she has to do is writing 500 words answering the deceptively simple question, "What Does Motherhood Mean to Me?" In the process of trying by nightfall to put these thoughts into words that don't "sound like bad ad copy," Eliza rediscovers her own voice and realizes what is truly valuable in her life.

One morning, Eliza wakes Clara up and when they are about to leave for school, they realize they have forgotten Clara's schoolbag at home. Eliza has to dress up and take Clara her schoolbag to school. Later on, Eliza has to take Lucas and her dog out. When she returns home, she has many problems to find an unoccupied parking slot. As the parking officer arrives, she pays some money to a rude punk to go away and let the parking slot nearest to her building free.

Her day from hell is not over. She takes Lucas to the park. There, she talks to Sheila her best friend, who agrees to pick Clara up from school. Sheila and Eliza decide to go shopping, because the latter is so stressed. There is a film being recorded on her street, so her car is taken away to another street far away, and she can not use it as a warehouse to keep Clara's party materials. When Clara goes to pick up the birthday cake, there is a mistake in the spelling of Clara's name. She argues with the bakery shop-attendant, who insists that only the chef-baker can solve the problem, and he is not there at the moment.

She has to take everything up to her fourth-floor flat in the liftless building. There, there is a messenger who is waiting for Eliza's husband to open the door. Makish feels pity for Eliza's exhausted and stressed-out life, so he helps to take all her stuff to her flat. They start to talk, and they dance to some music. Eliza sees herself in that ambitious young man who is waiting for his big break into writing plays with an Indian domestic atmosphere, as he describes them. Eliza realizes that her ambitions have come to not. Sheila gets frantic when she discovers Eliza has told about what she had told her in confidence, and has written it all out in her blog for everybody to see. Anyway, although she is mad at her, Sheila goes to pick Clara up from school.

Eliza keeps on organizing the party. She also tries to finish a 500-word motherhood-themed article for a magazine. She wants to win the contest, to have this article published and return to work outside of home.

Suddenly, she feels she can not cope anymore, and leaves the city for New Jersey. She does not answer the phone when her husband calls her. When Eliza finally picks it up, she is in time to tell him what to do when Lucas swallows a toy car. Eliza makes a crazy highway turn and goes back home.

The party happens. Her husband is understanding and loving. Eliza is forgiven by Sheila, her heavily-pregnant friend. An elderly neighbor talks about how much fun she used to have when she was younger, and Welsh loses himself a little bit and enjoys the birthday party jumping and having fun. Later, Eliza and her husband Welsh go up to the rooftop. There, he shows her a 24,000 dollar check. She is surprised about it. He decided to sell his autographed 1st-edition Emerson book, and with this money, they will be able to pay for Lucas' schooling for two years and make some changes in her life, so that she can return to write part-time. Eliza is overjoyed, and the hint is that they are about to make love on the rooftop.

*Motherhood* is family movie. *Motherhood* was made 2008 and released in US in general October 23, 2009. This movie was taken for 25 days with starting in May 2008, which is setting of place New York City, New York USA and shot entirely on plot location in New York's West Village. Runtime in this movie is 90 minutes, released VCD and DVD distributed by Freestyle Releasing. Beside that this movie was published in Germany, UK (London), Spain, Singapore, Netherlands, Brazil with

PG 13 for language. *Motherhood* gets good response from public and *Motherhood* which only had Box Office \$10 million for budget and finally gain \$726,354.

*Motherhood* also requires many comments from the other commentator, because the good acceptance does not only come from the market, but also from the movie expert. Roger Ebert (2009) say that “billed as a comedy, but at no point will you require oxygen. There are some smiles and chuckles and a couple of actual laugh, but the overall effect is underwhelming; Thurman is “doing her best with a role that may offer her less than any other in her career, even though she is constantly on screen. Not only from the movie gets good acceptance but also from the actress.

*Motherhood* got two awards. The winning comes from Thurman won two awards at the Boston Film Festival, one for best actress for her work in *Motherhood*, and out-of-competition film excellence award for her career accomplishment. Beside that *Motherhood* also showed in International Film Festival, like Sundance Film Festival (USA), European Film market (Germany), Chicago International Film Festival (USA), mill Valley Film Festival (USA) and still many more.

*Motherhood* also earns complained, especially from audience and movie watcher. A. O. Scott said Thurman's character is "scattered, ambivalent, flaky and inconsistent – all of which is fine, and energetically conveyed by Ms. Thurman. But what are tolerable quirks in

a person can be deadly to a narrative, and Ms. Dieckmann, trying for observational nuance, descends into trivia and wishful thinking. “The humor is soft, the dramas are small, and the movie stumbles from loose and scruffy naturalism to sitcom tidiness.” From the other opinion, *Motherhood* movie also has “negative communication message”, should be avoided from parents and particularly a mother, against to influence about growing up the children. In this movie, Eliza gives bad communication when she says bad words and smokes in front of her child.

*Motherhood* movie is an interesting and inspiration movie such as for mother or women being a mother; there are four aspects that make this movie really interesting. Firstly is *Motherhood* has great story: has real point of view can be real story. This story is not only happening in story movie but also can be occurring on the real life as well as a girl or a wife who becomes a mother. They have concept about how to taking care the husband, family and child. *Motherhood* movie tries to show the difficult thing to keep the balancing it. A human being, especially a woman has self challenge to be struggle of the family problem like interpersonal dissatisfaction. As the audience, the writer explores from the weakness of the communication among husband-wife spouse with true and false must to do. Beside that, from this movie, Uma Thurman makes audience amazed when she tries to finished her daughter party, and still hold of her responsibility as well as a mother. The

transformation of life that made by Thurman is success in building the character of Eliza Welch.

Second is the visualization and the cast of the movie. Uma Thurman makes audience feel wonder-strike with this comedy and drama movie, although this movie shows how the difficulty become a mother to take care of the family with the complicated family problem, but beside that the writer explores the real role of a mother to be good mother for family. The casts also have a valuable part to support this movie become more real. In this movie, Anthony Edwards who plays as Avery is a good actor. He makes character of Avery as a husband has big relation and impact to Eliza as a wife. They play the character to make the conflict to be a real conflict in the real life on the real family. Minnie Driver also plays Sheila very well. Her acting can be seen when she as the best friend of Eliza, she always gives support for Eliza and a place where Eliza can unburden about her life other than her blog.

Thirdly is motherhood feeling that appears in this movie. Eliza is a mother who has many activities. This makes her always feel tired with her life, until she wants to actualize herself if she knows there is no chance to change her activity. *Motherhood* movie tells that she ever had a crisis experience until she wants to leave her regularly as a mother. She asks divorce from her husband and leaves her family and her child. But finally, she realizes about her mistake, and absolutely she tries to change her opinion about all those time in her life and tries to share with her

husband about anything else. *Motherhood* taps into the difficult challenges facing time-starved women who are willing to throw themselves into parenting but also realizes the need to care for their own souls. Dieckmann gives the audience a greater understanding of how a great woman and mother.

Fourthly, this movie deals with mother's role. Dieckmann, the director, wants the audience to understand that mother's role really has big impact in a family. A mother has important role and happiness thing. She must choose bad or good thing for her family, for her child and her life. She must take a choice about her priority of her life, she also has big authority to save her family become happy family. The effects can be studied in feminist term which studies in woman's life of woman's role.

According to those reasons, the researcher would like to explore and analyze mother's role in *Motherhood* movie based on the Feminist Perspective, and the title is **MOTHER'S ROLE IN *MOTHERHOOD* MOVIE (2009) DIRECTED BY KATHERINE DIECKMANN: A FEMINIST APPROACH.**

## **B. Literature Review**

*Motherhood* movie can be viewed by feminist approach. To accomplish her study the writer found several studies. First, it comes from Rachel Diana Davidson (Indiana University) entitled "*SUBVERSIVE VOICES IN CONTEMPORARY MOTHERHOOD: THE RHETORIC OF RESISTANCE IN INDEPENDENT FILM*



*NARRATIVES*". The focus of this study is on the interpretive textual analysis, informed by a feminist perspective, is applied to five independent films written and directed by female filmmakers in order to understand to what extent the rhetorical construction of motherhood as presented in the films deviates from or supports a patriarchal Western vision. This study provides a rich textual analysis of *Amreeka* (2009), *Frozen River* (2008), *Waitress* (2006), *The Dead Girl* (2006), and *Lovely and Amazing* (2001); five films that each considers the role of contemporary mothering as a central part of its plot. Each film has been written and directed by a female filmmaker. Informed by resistance theory, the findings suggest the female filmmakers utilize the symbolic inversion tactic as a tool to resist their subordinate discourses give voice to female filmmakers attempting to negotiate power in a traditionally patriarchal forum by invoking a rhetoric of resistance.

The difference of this study and the previous study is in the theme and the perspective. The previous study explains how are the subversive voices in contemporary motherhood can be rhetoric of resistance in independent film narratives directed by female filmmaker. Although both uses a feminist approach but the perspective or the focus of the each study is different. The writer analyzes mother's role in *Motherhood* movie by using a Feminist Approach.

The second researcher is article conducted by Andrea O'Reilly entitled "Twenty-first Century Motherhood: Experience, Identity, Policy, Agency". This article focuses on the topic of motherhood has emerged as a central and significant topic of scholarly inquiry across a wide range of

academic disciplines. A cursory review reveals that hundreds of scholarly articles have been published on almost every motherhood theme imaginable. The volume invites dialogue and debate on these important issues so that, as mothers and as a culture, are able to fully comprehend and respond appropriately to such momentous changes. While the changes examined here cannot be undone, it hopes that this volume will enable to better appreciate and respond to these developments by situating maternal experience, identity, policy, and agency in an explicitly twenty-first-century context.

This article aims to explore Twenty-first Century Motherhood: Experience, Identity, Policy, Agency, this article can construct the topic of motherhood has emerged as a central and significant topic of scholarly inquiry across a wide range of academic disciplines. The writer perceives from this article can be implemented in mother's role issue in movie *Motherhood*. The writer analyzes this article by using different topic to retell how mother's role can be important thing in a family to gets mother empowerment.

The third is article from Ella Taylor entitled "For a Harried Mom, A Real Fairy Tale of an Ending", this article shows the real story of the difficulties become a mother in *Motherhood* movie. She also introduces herself that she is a mother.

This article aims to explain about the role and the story of a mother not only in the movie but also in the real life. This article also

helps the writer in making research paper, entitled “Mother’s Role on Motherhood movie (2009) Directed by Katherine Dieckmann: A Feminist Approach.

### **C. Problem Statement**

Based on the title and background above, the writer formulates the problem statement as follow: “How is Mother’s role reflected in *Motherhood* movie?”

### **D. Limitation of the Study**

The writer focuses in the limitation of the study on analysis of mother’s role in *Motherhood* movie based on a feminist approach.

### **E. Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows:

1. To analyze *Motherhood* movie based on the structural elements of the movie.
2. To describe the Mother’s role in *Motherhood* movie based on a feminist approach.

### **F. Benefit of the Study**

The study of Mother’s role in *Motherhood* movie has two benefits:

#### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

The study is expected to give contribution to the larger body of knowledge especially on understanding literary studies on mother's role in *Motherhood* movie by using a feminist approach.

## **2. Practical Benefit**

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer and another student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or another University who have expected and interest with literary study on the movie from a Feminist Approach.

## **G. Research Method**

### **1. Type of the Study**

The type of this research is descriptive qualitative. Descriptive qualitative is a type of research which result the descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from the observed object.

### **2. Type of the Data and the Data Source**

#### **a. Type of Data**

The data of this study are scenes and dialogue in *Motherhood* movie by Katherine Dieckmann.

#### **b. Data Source**

- 1) The primary data source is the film and script of *Motherhood* movie directed by Katherine Dieckmann which is related to the study.

- 2) The secondary data sources are the books and other sources that support the analysis.

### **3. Object of the Study**

The object of this study is *Motherhood* directed by Katherine Dieckmann and published by Freestyle Rleasing in 2009. It is analyzed by using a feminist approach.

### **4. Techniques of the Data Collection**

The method of data collection in this study is note-taking and image-capturing. The researcher views the primary data repeatedly to reach more understanding of source. Next, the writer takes, compares, quotes, and studies others data into some categories and develops them into a good unity.

### **5. Techniques of Data Analysis**

The technique of data analysis in this study is descriptive. It is concerns with the structural elements of the movie, the writer uses a feminist approach, and draws conclusion.

## **H. Research Paper Organization**

The research paper organization of “Mother’s role in *Motherhood* movie (2009) Directed by Katherine Dieckmann: A Feminist Approach” is as follows, the first chapter is Introduction, which consists of background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, theoretical approach, research method, and research paper organization. The second chapter comprises of

the underlying theory, which presents the notion of mother's role, the notion of feminism, major principal of feminism, structural elements of the movie and theoretical application. The third chapter deals with social background of American society in the late of twentieth century. The fourth is the structural analysis of the movie, which involves the narratives elements, technical elements, and discussion. The fifth chapter presents the feminist analysis and discussion. Finally, the sixth chapter presents conclusion and suggestion.